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Geneva and After . . . *R.P.D.*

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The Right to Strike . . . *Arthur Horner*

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Unpublished Letters of Frederick Engels

August, 1955

One shilling and sixpence

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THE YOUNG GUARD

TEN YEARS ago a twenty-year-old in the 8th Hussars stood on guard outside Mr. Attlee's bungalow at Potsdam. Next door Red Army Guards did like duty at the headquarters of the Soviet delegation, led by Marshal Stalin; near by was the U.S. group, headed by President Truman. On August 2, after a fortnight's conference, they signed the famous 'Tripartite' Declaration, expressing 'renewed confidence that their Governments and peoples, together with the other United Nations, will ensure the creation of a just and enduring peace'. On the eve of a new top-level conference, that young guard writes to me with his memories of 'those unforgettable days'. He was only 19 when he landed some months before in Normandy, a soldier's son amongst many former ex-unemployed miners from Durham. By late spring they were 'resting in the water-meadow country of Schleswig-Holstein, waiting for the message to come through that the Red Army had given permission for us to enter Berlin. Then we started that 200-mile march, the memory of which will remain with me all the days that I live. We crossed the Elbe by a Russian "Bailey bridge", decorated by an arch topped with hammer and sickle and inscribed with Russian words of welcome. On to Berlin, with a Soviet soldier every few hundred yards presenting arms or saluting'. He recalls stopping on the road to brew some tea and how they were pestered by a crowd of German women 'running up to grumble and complain about Russian-this and Russian-that; but I remember to this day how our lads told them to push-off, they just weren't interested in anti-Russian propaganda. In Berlin we were quartered by the Olympic Stadium; it was there we heard the news that Labour had won the election'. Off duty, he often walked freely through the Brandenburg Gate to look at the Soviet sector, 'placarded with enormous pictures of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; and I remember thinking to myself "all this looks more like the aftermath of a revolution than a defeated occupied city". For every Briton that wandered cautiously over the line, there were hundreds of Russians who came every day into ours. And what an extraordinarily variegated soldiery they were! Some looked so like Londoners that they might quite easily have been Camden Town busmen in Soviet uniform; others must have come from all parts of the Soviet Union. Many lower-ranking officers had the rough, creased faces of workers and peasants; but some of the ordinary soldiers were what we in England would term middle class. Some could speak good French, which I can speak passably well myself; they seemed to me extremely well-informed and highly educated. Well, this is a long letter; but R.P.D.'s June Notes awakened memories of those unforgettable days ten years ago'.

(Continued on page iii of cover)

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Vol. XXXVI, No. 8 CONTENTS August, 1955

Page

NOTES OF THE MONTH: Geneva and After 337
THE RIGHT TO STRIKE, by A. L. Horner 352
PEACEMAKING: NEW PHASE, by Ivor Montagu 355
LABOUR 'RETHINKERS', by James Klugmann 363
UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF FREDERICK ENGELS 368
Document of the Month: FOR PEACE IN MALAYA 376
Obituary: Stanley Bennett 378
HIROSHIMA: Drawings for the Panels 360-361
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO 251

Book Reviews:
Peaceful Co-Existence, by Andrew Rothstein: *D. N. Pritt, Q.C.* .. 379
The Scalpel, The Sword, by S. Gordon and T. Allen: *Horace Joules* 380
The British Working Class Reader, by R. K. Webb: *John Saville* .. 381
Australian Government and Politics, by J. D. B. Miller: *Jessie Street* 382
Roman Britain, by I. A. Richmond: *John Morris* 383
Greek Myths, by Robert Graves: *R.B.* 383
M.R.A. Exposed, by S. S. Mariswamy 384

Notes of the Month

Geneva and After

'Step by step, the contradictions in the world can be resolved and the hopes of the peoples crowned with victory.'

Appeal of the World Peace Assembly at Helsinki, June 29, 1955.

WITH the Geneva Four Power Conference of Heads of States we have reached the Great Divide of the modern international situation. The supreme effort has now opened to save mankind from thermo-nuclear war before it is too late; to change the course from the strategy of cold war and opposing armed camps and enter on the path of serious negotiations; to ease the burden of armaments; to seek to find, if not final solutions, at any rate preliminary compromises on the most burning danger spots which threaten to burst out into a conflagration; to tackle the new and

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thorny problems of co-existence in order to enter on the path of international co-operation. Whatever the immediate outcome of the preliminary exchanges of Geneva, there is no doubt that these are the aims for whose achievement the peoples of the world are looking.

The First Stage

It would be premature to attempt to assess the prospects of Geneva, whose communiqué will be available by the time these Notes are read. It is evident that, in the existing relations of forces, with the tension and sharpness of existing points of conflict, Geneva can at the best only be the first stage in a long and arduous journey. There is no lack of negative, critical, lugubrious and even openly hostile voices to emphasise the obstacles. But the sights are set. The strong and ever more actively mobilised will of mankind for peace has already proved itself with increasing strength during these recent years. It brought an end to the wars in Korea and Vietnam in place of their threatened extension. For ten years it has stayed the hands of those who urged the dropping of the atom bomb and the hydrogen bomb. It has found its voice of the majority of mankind at Bandung, through Helsinki, or through the new world role of India and Nehru alongside all those striving for peace, no less than through the solemn plea of world renowned scientists. It won, in spite of all, the success of last year's Geneva Conference: and has finally succeeded, in the face of the most prolonged and obstinate resistance, in compelling this meeting of the Heads of States for negotiation. This same will of two and a half thousand million human beings can and must surmount the still remaining heavy obstacles to win the goal in this most critical turning point of human history.

A Voice from the Past

The moment of the Geneva meeting is thick with anniversaries which carry their lessons and their warnings. The tenth anniversary of Potsdam, whose decisions, if they had been carried out, could have ensured a united, peaceful, democratic, disarmed and neutral Germany in place of the present dangerous situation. The forty-first anniversary of the outbreak of the first world war, which opened the era of imperialist world wars. The tenth anniversary of Hiroshima, which opened the era of atomic diplomacy. There is another anniversary this month, of a different character, which is not only

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worthy of commemoration for its own sake, but which may also call to mind some teachings that have a very close bearing on our problems today. This August sees the sixtieth anniversary of the death of Engels, the pioneer and co-founder of Marxism, who lived to witness the initial years of transition of the world into the imperialist era, and looked ahead with penetrating gaze to some of the problems which would arise in this era. Over two hundred letters of Engels written during these critical years, which have remained buried away and unknown through all this intervening period, have now become available, and will shortly be published in three volumes in France, where they were discovered. We begin this month, by the courtesy of the French editors, the publication of a series of the letters bearing on the English scene and the English labour and socialist movement during these years, in the original English text as they were written, and now published for the first time in our journal. Publication of the letters dealing with the situation in France has been begun in the French journal *La Pensée* for May-June, 1955, and in the first series, analysing the crisis associated with the bid for power by the chauvinist demagogue General Boulanger in France, Engels deals with the prospect of a European War in the new world conditions beginning to develop and expresses his viewpoint.

'The Most Terrible Contingency'

Cutting through the myriad political confusions arising from the Boulanger crisis and affecting also the French socialist movement, Engels went straight to the main point—the menace of a new European war. Writing sixty-six years ago, on March 29, 1889, in a letter to Paul Lafargue, the son-in-law of Marx, Engels declared:

> As for war, this represents in my view the most terrible contingency. . . . A war in which there will be ten to fifteen million combatants, an unheard of devastation, universal violent suppression of our movement, a revival of chauvinism in all countries, and at the end a general enfeeblement ten times worse than after 1815, a period of reaction based on the exhaustion of the peoples bled white—all this against the small chance that from this desperate war could result a revolution—this prospect fills me with horror. Above all, for our movement in Germany, which would be overwhelmed, crushed and extinguished by force, while peace gives us practically certain victory.

In these words, a quarter of a century before the war of 1914, Engels foresaw the deadly type of new imperialist world war which was preparing (and whose outlines he was to predict a few years later, after the Franco-Russian Alliance, with such startling accuracy, when he foretold the German thrust to the West and halt at the

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Marne, the transition to trench warfare, and the transformation of the situation by the outbreak of the Russian Revolution). Without hesitation the veteran leader of Marxism, even while recognising the revolutionary consequences which could arise from reactionary imperialist war, proclaimed the aim of socialism and the working class movement: for peace and against a new European war. A war of the Powers with modern resources would represent immeasurable destruction and disaster for humanity. 'Peace gives us practically certain victory.'

The Alternatives before Mankind

These warning words of Engels cry aloud to us in the infinitely sharpened alternatives of today. It is their least significance that they incidentally nail down for ever the hoary and discredited calumny that Communists have ever sought the path to the victory of socialism through the consequences of reactionary imperialist war. Their burning significance goes very much closer to the problems we now have to face. For the truth of the prophetic warning of the alternatives before mankind, which Engels foreshadowed with such insight in the conditions of two-thirds of a century ago, is now intensified a thousandfold; and beyond calculation, by modern scientific, technical, strategic and political development. Engels foresaw with 'horror' the prospect of the destruction and misery which the first imperialist world war would bring. What would he say today of the prospect of thermo-nuclear war? The gravity of the alternatives can no longer be denied or minimised in any responsible quarter. The extending consciousness of the gravity of these alternatives (the recent appeal signed by Einstein, Russell and other scientists has given both an expression and a further impetus to this consciousness) and the consequent overwhelming demand of the peoples everywhere for peace, irrespective of social and political differences, has itself become a new and increasingly powerful factor in the international situation. It is this universal demand which has helped to give rise to the new and unique stage of international relations which has found its initial expression in the Geneva Conference of Heads of States. On the long-term outcome of Geneva and its sequel the future hangs.

Geneva in Perspective

We need to recognise that it is in many respects a profoundly new world situation which has brought about the confrontation of

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the Geneva Conference. It is a situation which requires a consciously fresh approach from all who are concerned for the future. During the six decades since Engels died, we have passed through not only innumerable secondary wars, both smaller and greater, but also two general wars or world wars. The destructiveness of the first world war (now no more than an historical record to the majority of those living today) fully corresponded to the anticipations of Engels' warning—even though the advancing strength and consciousness of the working class and socialist movement during the quarter of a century between when he wrote and its outbreak had reached sufficient maturity, not yet to prevent it, but to achieve, even out of its ruins, a positive leap forward of humanity through the first victory of socialism and the beginning of emancipation from imperialism. The destructiveness and horrors of the second world war far exceeded the record of the first. Nevertheless, the movement of human liberation swept further forward, through the victory of the peoples over fascism, and during the succeeding years, with the victory of the Chinese Revolution and the advance of colonial liberation.

Ten Years of Cold War

But it is from this very advance of liberation, and shrinking of the area of imperialism, that has arisen the new type of situation that has found expression in the politics and international relations of these ten years since the victory over fascism, and indeed in an initial and embryonic form before the end of the war, as soon as the prospect of victory of popular anti-fascist liberation, with the consequent inevitable prospective social and political changes, drew into view. This new feature which has increasingly dominated international politics and relations during the past ten years (parallels could be traced in the period between the two world wars, but in a less developed and dominant form) has been the emergence of the counter-policy and strategy of the cold war. The cold war has defeated the aims of international co-operation through the United Nations, divided the world into opposing diplomatic and armed camps, erected heavy barriers against international economic co-operation, brought already the threat of general conflict several times very close through local wars, and in the present culminating stage, with the headlong advance of armaments and of scientific invention, has given rise to the manifest menace of a thermo-nuclear war such as would involve an incalculable destruction beyond any range of comparison with the record of previous world wars. It is

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at this point that the universal demand has arisen from the widest sections of opinion to call a halt, on the brink of the precipice, whatever the social and political contradictions expressed in the cold war, and to press all the statesmen of all the leading powers, whatever their political outlook and differences, to confer in good faith in order to find an alternative path, at any rate for peaceful co-existence, and eventually for co-operation.

Problem of the Cold War

An understanding approach is necessary to this problem of the cold war. From the standpoint of the statesmen of the old imperialist powers, and representatives of the old social order, who have so long held the fate of the world in their hands, and who have not yet been able to reconcile themselves to a changing world or to face the fact that they represent only a minority of the world's population, the advance of Communism and popular liberation over an extending area of the world, and the shrinking of the area of imperialism, represents a 'menace' and 'aggression' which they feel it their duty to combat. Not a military menace; for this vulgarised version of the supposed impending onslaught is only put out for popular consumption to secure acceptance of the heavy rearmament programmes; and all the leading statesmen and military chiefs have in their more serious statements admitted that they see no sign of any such warlike intention from the side of the socialist camp. Since, then, both sides proclaim their desire for peace, and undoubtedly in fact (with the exception of the 'preventive war' hotheads in the West, or bankrupt gamblers of the Chiang-Rhee type who openly look to a third world war as their only hope) fear a general war, where does the difficulty arise?

'Indirect Aggression'

If the more serious statements of the Western leaders are examined, it will be seen that the 'menace' of 'extending Communism' which they describe and of which they complain is not so much the mythical menace of a hypothetical future military onslaught, which they themselves have frequently admitted they regard as improbable, since they recognise that—to put it at its lowest—it is not to the interest of the Soviet Union, China or the People's Democracies in Europe to hazard the gigantic reconstruction in which they are engaged in a general war. The solid substratum of fact which the Western leaders have in mind when they speak of the 'menace' of 'extending Communism', which they genuinely fear, and against

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which they genuinely believe it necessary to build up their countermeasures, even to the point of preparing and risking general war, is the real historical development of the extending advance, challenge and victories of the militant popular movement in all the vast territories under their direct or indirect control, or formerly under their control, undermining the basis of their domination ('indirect aggression', 'subversion', etc.). Since every such local uprising, strike movement, colonial liberation struggle or advance of Communism anywhere is regarded, in accordance with the ideology of the Western leaders, as an action of 'Russia'—or, in the recent period, also of 'China'—supposedly operating by a kind of remote control, even though admittedly without any physical or military intervention to counter the often massive military intervention by the Western powers, it is manifest that this line of thought turns every such local issue into an issue of Great Power relations, ceaselessly giving rise to the menace of general war.

A Dangerous Theory

It is evident that this theory of the cold war, which has during these past ten years governed the whole approach of Western official thought, poisons international relations, assumes the inevitable division of the world into opposing armed camps moving toward a future prospective or even—in some versions of the theory—inevitable world war, bases every detail political and strategic calculation on this analysis of the world situation, and thereby renders international co-operation impossible. To restore harmonious, or at any rate, to begin with, less disharmonious international relations, it is essential to strike at the roots of this theory. This is the deeper task confronting the statesmen of the powers, which underlies all the proceedings that have been begun at Geneva, and which is reflected in all the detail specific issues (disarmament, European security, Germany, Formosa and the place of China in the United Nations, etc.). All these specific issues are capable of compromise adjustment, once the assumption of the inevitable division of the world into hostile armed camps is abandoned.

Prisoners of a Theory

The peculiar difficulty of dislodging the theory of the cold war from the minds of Western ideologists lies in the fact that, while the threat is declared to be military, the theory is maintained independently of any evidence of any military action or aggression. Indeed,

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the very absence of military action or aggression is turned into a confirmation of the theory. The admittedly pacific attitude of the Soviet Union in international relations is at once proclaimed to be either a 'sign of weakness', a concession to 'Western strength', or, alternatively, a 'trap', a 'deception', a 'diplomatic manœuvre to make the West relax' and so forth, necessitating ceaseless warnings against the menace of such relaxation. The simple possibility that the successive actions of the Soviet Union for peace and the relaxation of international tension might be governed by the interests of the socialist states, as of all humanity, in saving peace, is automatically dismissed by these super-wise experts as unworthy of consideration. Thus all the facts of life are relentlessly forced into the iron framework of the rigid, pre-conceived assumptions of a false theory.

A Change of Heart Needed

The Soviet Union has in the current period undertaken the widest series of peaceful initiatives which have helped, not only in the solution or advance to solution of particular problems, but in creating a favourable atmosphere for international conciliation. Only a fool would see in this wisdom a sign of weakness; only a very ignorant victim of propaganda would under-estimate the peaceful strength in every field (most recently witnessed in the outcome of the last Five Year Plan, with a 70 per cent. increase in industrial output in four and one-third years, and a machine-building output four and a half times the level when Hitler attacked) which finds reflection in the calm confidence of these peaceful moves. Mr. Attlee has said at the recent congress of the 'Socialist International' (whose proceedings appear to have been mainly directed to cast a spanner in the delicate machinery of international conciliation) that it is necessary to watch very carefully to see whether there really is a Soviet 'change of heart'. Mr. Attlee has never been noted for self-criticism. It might be respectfully suggested that some 'change of heart' is needed from the Western side.

Distorted Logic of the Cold War

We would beseech the Western ideologists to examine once afresh the assumptions of the strangely distorted logic of their cold war theory which still blocks the road to peace. On the one hand, the proclamation of a supposed imminent Soviet military threat is held to justify the most extreme and burdensome rearmanent programmes, the establishment of military bases all over the world, the

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forging of a chain of sectional military blocs of subsidised subordinate countries, and similar measures. On the other hand, not only is no evidence whatever offered for the existence of the military threat save in the fevered imagination of the propagandists concerned; but the actual evidence that is offered is a clamorous complaint of the absence of Soviet military action or aggression as a proof of the justification of the cold war theory.

A Curious Charge-Sheet of 'Aggression'

It is precisely the complaint of Sir Winston Churchill that, as he declared in his election address in May, 'the Russian Soviet and their satellites . . . have communised nearly half Europe and all China without the loss of a single Russian soldier'. It is precisely because in Czechoslovakia the attempted coup of the Right Ministers to forestall the advance of the Communist Party from the 40 per cent. of the electorate already won to an absolute majority in the impending elections was defeated by the united resistance of the working people and a parliamentary majority, without the presence or intervention of a single Russian soldier, that this is seen and quoted as the classic example of 'Russian aggression' and the 'Russian conquest of Czechoslovakia', justifying the cold war and the Atlantic Treaty. It is precisely because the Korean people resisted Rhee's 'March to the North' and defended their country against the combined imperialist invasion, without the participation of a single Soviet soldier, and with the intervention of the Chinese volunteers only after due warning had been given that an advance of the combined imperialist armies to the Yalu would constitute a threat to China, that these genuine struggles of national defence have been presented as successive 'proofs' of 'aggression'. It is precisely because the Chinese people by their own strength defeated and drove out Chiang Kai-shek, despite the limitless American material and arms support available for him, that the United States has so far refused to recognise the truly democratic Government—proved in the support of the people by the sternest test of all—of the Chinese People's Republic, and has preferred to recognise the police state of Chiang maintained only by their subsidies and arms behind the guns of the American navy.

Cold War Hysteria

The insane logic goes further. It is the familiar complaint of the Western military chiefs and spokesmen of the cold war theory,

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ceaselessly repeated in their strategic estimations of the problems they have to face, that they have to fight at enormous cost, with armies and supplies shipped over thousands of miles, against peoples fighting in their own countries on the basis of local support and leadership, while the Soviet Union (whom, in accordance with their theory, they regard as responsible), through all these years of interminable local and regional wars draining the Western imperialist powers, remains at peace and has not a single soldier fighting anywhere. From this situation arises the reiterated clamorous demands of the more reckless, including of influential sections of the military commanders, to 'strike at the base', in place of squandering forces in endless local wars, 'bomb Moscow', 'drop the H-bomb', 'take off the wraps', counter any local uprising by 'massive retaliation', etc. From their standpoint, even when they present these more extreme proposals and policies, the Western leaders regard themselves, not as aggressors, when they invade and spread destruction in the countries of other peoples, or propose to bomb foreign capitals, but as victims of aggression and engaged in defence. Such is the peculiar upside down logic of the theory of the cold war, which has grown to the present menacing international situation.

Policy of Strength

The theory of the cold war leads to the 'policy of strength' as its necessary counterpart. The world is seen as divided into two opposing and inevitably hostile blocs, the bloc of the countries in the imperialist orbit (so-called 'democratic' or 'free world', but the actual content, including all the colonial and semi-colonial countries, autocratic colonial and colour-bar régimes, dependent military dictatorships, etc., does not correspond to the label), and the bloc of the countries of socialism and popular democracy (so-called 'Communist bloc'). The relation between these two is not seen as simply a difference of social, economic and political systems, or even of competition in the sense of endeavouring to demonstrate the relative success of either system in meeting the needs of the people, while recognising common interests in the maintenance of peace and in the development of international economic co-operation. The relationship is seen in military and strategic terms of hostility, as a relation of permanent war, open or latent, of 'cold war' which may at any moment break into 'hot war', with the consequent necessity of basing all calculations on strategic considerations overriding all other issues. Hence the 'policy of strength'. 'The West' must be 'overwhelmingly strong' to impose its will. Negotiations become,

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not a search for agreement but a relative test of strength. In the most recent period, with the increasing bankruptcy and discrediting of the whole cold war theory, the attempt is currently made to put a more respectable face on the 'policy of strength' by presenting it as a policy of the 'balance of power', that is, to ensure sufficient parity of strength for effective negotiation. But this was not the original conception presented in the 'policy of strength'. It is only necessary to recall the terms of Churchill's Fulton speech, when he declared that 'what we want is not a quivering precarious balance of power, but an overwhelming assurance of strength', with the aim of ending the régime of people's democracy in Eastern Europe and the imposition of similar objectives.

Bankruptcy of the Cold War Theory

To any sane observer the experience of the past decade has increasingly demonstrated the bankruptcy of the cold war theory, even though that theory is still so far tenaciously held in Western official quarters, and especially in Western military quarters. When the Truman Doctrine, which first embodied the cold war theory, was officially promulgated by the United States in March, 1947, the leading American publicist, Walter Lippman, while sharing the basic anti-communist objectives, wrote a pamphlet, *The Cold War: A Study in U.S. Foreign Policy,* which was in fact a devastating exposure of the whole attempt to build a ramshackle coalition of American-dominated and subsidised states to surround and exercise pressure on the Soviet Union, and predicted the failure of the policy of 'containment'. That prediction has proved justified. Despite the most limitless expenditure in building up armaments, military alliances and overseas bases, as well as in the conduct of overseas wars, none of the professed aims of the policy has been achieved.

History Marches Forward

On the one hand, the cold war policy has not succeeded in preventing the further advance of an extending range of peoples to freedom from imperialist domination, even though through a path of heavy sacrifices, in face of all the imperialist interventionist expeditions and wars, bombing and napalm, or subsidising of reactionary puppet dictators. The cold war was officially proclaimed in 1947. China won through to freedom in 1949. The Korean and Vietnam peoples have defeated the attempts at their subjugation, even though unification has still to be achieved. All Asia is moving

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forward, as Bandung revealed. The subsidised Middle Eastern dictatorships, as in Iran, Iraq or Jordan, have only been precariously established and maintained by foreign support against the revolt of their peoples, and can count on no long lease of life. All Africa stirs from end to end of the continent. The wheels of history cannot be turned back by any new Holy Alliance.

Slogans in the Discard

After the resounding failure of 'containment' had been demonstrated in China, and the Korean War had demonstrated that American military power was not so almighty as some of its protagonists had imagined, the Republicans swept to office with the cry to throw overboard the policy of 'containment' and replace it by a more 'dynamic' policy to 'roll back the frontiers of Communism', 'liberate' the peoples of Eastern Europe, *i.e.*, dismantle popular democracy, and the like. All these slogans have had to pass into the discard as slogans of action, and disappear into the limbo of stale counter-revolutionary propaganda or diplomatic counters of reaction for obstructing negotiation. President Eisenhower during his years of office has had to learn many lessons. The resounding slogans of the electoral platform assumed a superiority which did not exist. For the 'policy of strength' is also today in sorry case.

Beware of the Arms Race

The so-called 'policy of strength' is only the dressed-up version of the old exploded fallacy which has underlain every arms race. The Labour Party and trade union leaders who repeat this dogma today as new-found wisdom should go back to school with the old Arthur Henderson who long ago exposed it. The belief that you can ensure peace by building up overwhelming strength on your side only leads to the opposite result. Strength is answered by strength; and the outcome is not only an ever more crushing burden of armaments, but increased insecurity, in place of security, mutual distrust, and the ever present danger that, as the strain grows intolerable the breaking point will come when the guns go off. For a short time the Western strategists hugged the belief that they had superiority with the monopoly of the atom bomb. That illusion was shattered in 1947 when Molotov declared that there was no atomic monopoly. Thereafter the Western strategists transferred their hope to the hydrogen bomb as the weapon of superiority. That

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illusion also was shattered when Molotov gave the warning in February of this year that 'with respect to hydrogen weapons, the United States and not the Soviet Union is among those who are lagging behind'. During the last few months the Western strategists have sought to console themselves with the reflection that at any rate they held unquestionable superiority in the production of long-range transcontinental bombers to deliver the bomb. That illusion was shattered by the Soviet air display at the beginning of July, after which the U.S. General Phillips had mournfully to admit that 'the Soviets have succeeded in getting into production in advance aircraft in any one type two or three years ahead of the West' and 'every type faster and in greater numbers than the United States' (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 11). There is no solution along this path, as the Soviet leaders have been the first to emphasise. The only constructive solution is, not rearmament, but agreed disarmament as part of a negotiated settlement. And here the Soviet disarmament plan, incorporating the Anglo-French proposals (which the United States has not yet accepted), has presented so obviously acceptable a concrete plan that President Eisenhower has had to confess himself as feeling like a 'squirrel in a cage' in trying to find an answer or explain what American disarmament policy is.

Thermo-nuclear War

Once the illusion of superior strength to impose terms has to be abandoned, what remains? The only practical course that remains is: genuine negotiation. The road leads to Geneva. To get down from the high horse of a supposed divine right of 'the West' to order the world, lay down rigid terms for acceptance, or instruct the lesser breeds on what social and political forms they must adopt. All that belongs to a vanished age, although the pontiffs of Fleet Street and the B.B.C. have not yet quite learned the lesson. The task now is to meet as equals in order to find settlements on pain of death; compromise settlements, provisional settlements, not yet, perhaps, satisfactory settlements, but enough to tide over the present phase without war, to enable peoples to live together, and prepare the way for better settlements. For the only alternative is the desperate alternative to which the Western strategists turned by the Atlantic Council decision on the eve of Christmas: the decision to adopt officially the policy of thermo-nuclear war. But that way means a two-way traffic. It is a path of voluntary suicide. Many scientists of world renown and authority, whose opinions have every claim to be heard, have stated that such war could mean the ex-

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tinction of life on earth. Others have questioned this. There is no need for the layman to enter into the dispute between authorities. For if the technical possibility exists, then the political necessity to prevent it becomes only the more imperative and inescapable. Confidence in the future of mankind is above all confidence in the capacity of mankind, by united effort, to defeat the menace, for man to be the master of his fate and enter on the tremendous inheritance which science and social organisation opens before us.

Peaceful Co-Existence

Is peaceful co-existence possible? There is no other sane alternative, so long as the world is in transition, so long as basic differences of social, economic and political systems exist, and above all at a stage when the level of scientific and technical development (which is in fact already crying aloud for the future of international communist society) makes any prospect of war between the states representative of different systems, not only lunacy, but a prospect of incalculable destruction. We can sympathise with the dilemma of the Western rulers who find themselves faced with the most extreme form of the alternatives already presented by Engels two-thirds of a century ago. Either general war with limitless destruction. Or peace, when 'peace gives us practically certain victory', that is, holds out the prospect of the extending advance of all the peoples of the world to a new social order, in which the old privileges of the imperialist rulers will end for ever. But that dilemma arises from history. We cannot guarantee the imperialist rulers the eternity of the order they represent. But even for them peace offers the best prospect of the most painless transition to a different future. For humanity in general peace opens out immeasurable hope. And the first step to win the aim of peace, in place of the present situation of uttermost menace, can only lie through the path of negotiation, in all the present difficulties, with all the present contradictions, by the present rulers, but with the united will and action of all the peoples of the world to compel settlements to be reached, in order to enter into the era of peaceful co-existence. For those who would wish to study further the practical meaning of peaceful co-existence, the necessary conditions for its realisation, and the answers to the difficulties that are most often raised, it may be useful to recommend the very clear and simple explanation provided in the recent Penguin of Andrew Rothstein *Peaceful Co-Existence*—a book whose importance is by no means measured, or is possibly, on the contrary,

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rather emphasised by the remarkable silence with which this contribution on the topic of wide current discussion and interest has been received in the general press. Is peaceful co-existence possible? Peaceful co-existence is common sense.

July 18, 1955. R.P.D.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

LAST YEAR OF THE SPANISH MONARCHY

But the most outstanding event of recent months has been the general strike in Seville, which not only paralysed the activities of the town for four days, but spread like wildfire through Andalusia to Huelva, Granada, Malaga and Cordova, and even as far afield as Saragossa and Bilbao. The immediate occasion of the strike was the general horror and indignation at the brutality of the Civil Guard, who attacked some peasants who were engaged in a struggle for higher wages, and injured one woman so severely with their swords that she died in hopital. A strike was also in progress at an olive oil factory, where the workers were demanding higher wages and shorter hours and under the leadership of the revolutionary unions a general strike of protest was proclaimed, and was generally welcomed by the masses. A strike of harbour workers had come to an end only a short while before this, and a militant spirit was abroad. Martial law was promptly proclaimed, and machine guns placed at strategic points, and the armed police attacked demonstrations of workers and students, broke up meetings, and killed and wounded a considerable number of strikers and onlookers. They took the opportunity of arresting all known revolutionaries, whether they had anything to do with the strike or not. In spite of threats and terrorism, the strike remained general for four days. Ten thousand workers came out, all trade and traffic was at a standstill, streets remained unswept, cafes, bakeries, theatres, all were closed and deserted. On June 26 the workers began to go back and on the 29th a Conference called by the Socialist Party and the Reformist Trade Unions urged the workers to call off the strike 'in the interests of the revolution'.

From *The World of Labour*, August, 1930.

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THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

A. L. HORNER

IN recent times the question of the workers' right to Strike has been given very great prominence. It is now being questioned seriously for the first time in many years. Those who raise the question, that is the employers and their Parliamentary representatives, insist at the same time upon the right to lock-out and to render workers redundant in accordance with the employers' interests.

The very basis of capitalist society consists in the buying and selling of labour power as a commodity. Theoretically the buyer of any commodity, including labour power, cannot be compelled to buy if he considers it is in his interests not to do so and, alternatively, the seller of a commodity cannot be compelled to sell. In actuality, however, the buyers, that is the employers, must buy labour power to secure profits, or themselves be compelled to become sellers, that is, workers. The seller (the worker) must sell his labour power or starve. Of course, differences arise between the buyer and the seller, whatever the commodity. The buyer always aims to purchase as cheaply as possible, whilst the seller endeavours to obtain as much as possible for the commodity.

Agreements are finally arrived at in the various industries, frequently after threats of strikes and lock-outs. The nature and content of industrial agreements is usually determined by the circumstances prevailing and the prospects at any given time. This is largely governed by the capitalist law of supply and demand. A shortage of labour in a period of full employment gives the seller the advantage. In periods of free supply of labour, when depression and unemployment prevail, the buyers, *i.e.,* the employers, have frequently demonstrated their great advantage in any bargain or agreement which was entered into. The role of the employers as a class in capitalist society was, and is, to organise themselves so as to prevent individual employers paying a higher price for labour power than the general body had determined upon. The role of the trade unions is to prevent individuals, or groups of individuals, accepting standards lower than those laid down by the general body of workers in trade union agreements.

The situation which surrounds negotiations to establish industrial agreements varies from time to time. There are periods of alternating depression and prosperity, and intermediate stages between both these conditions. There is no such thing as free bargaining in capitalist society. If we examine the period between the wars,

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wages, hours and conditions of work were ruthlessly depressed. Now we have a different situation—a so-called period of full employment when it is hard to secure manpower especially for the hard, difficult and dangerous industries. Yet these industries must be maintained as the basis of activity in the manufacturing industries.

If we take the outstanding example of the miners' experiences—everyone knows that in the period of depression when unemployment prevailed wages were reduced by more than half within a few years, hours were extended and employment became insecure for those in work and general conditions were worsened—one can see how the capitalist law of supply and demand was applied to the mining community and to workers generally. Now, however, when mineworkers are a scarce commodity and are in a position to secure great advantages, in fact, to ask for the moon and get it, they are urged to exercise 'responsibility' and to refrain from taking the advantages which they might have been entitled to claim strictly according to the capitalist law of supply and demand.

The employers, however, do not accept the application of their own laws in all circumstances. In periods of depression they want free markets, *i.e.,* to take advantage of the surplus of labour power. In periods of prosperity they call for the establishment, and the enforcing by law, of controls to prevent the workers using the very law which they so fiercely exploited in other days and as they will do again if the situation makes it possible for them to do so.

It should be made clear that the employing class of this country cannot have it both ways. What is sauce for the goose—is sauce for the gander. Today they are making bigger profits than ever before but they offer the strongest objection to the workers participating in these bigger profits through higher wages and improved working and living conditions. Hundreds of thousands of workers rightly claim that the employers must be compelled to disgorge part of these unprecedented profits. In other days the employers would not buy labour power or, if they did so, only for very low prices and in order to compel these low prices they 'locked-out' many thousands of workers as a means of compulsion. Now they claim the workers must be compelled to sell their commodity and that they must not be permitted to withhold their labour as a form of bargaining. The whole thing is illogical and impossible of appliation. The working class can never accept such reasoning. Trade Unions must seek to safeguard and improve the working and living conditions of their members as circumstances permit. To fail to do so is to lose the justification for the existence of trade unions.

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This is why wage-freeze, or wage restraint, was a fallacy and inconsistent with advancement of the true interests of the working people.

It has been said that if the law of supply and demand as exercised by the employers of this country in times of depression had been employed in reverse with the same ferocity by the trade unions of this country, the standards of the workers and their families would by now have been in a far more satisfactory position than they are and the employers would have been in receipt of much lower profits than they are receiving at the present time. Of course, when considering the enforcement of improved conditions in a given industry trade unions must take into account the effect of their actions upon upon the general body of the workers. The workers in each industry are part of the general working class. There can be no such thing as a permanent oasis of prosperity in a particular industry possessing temporary advantages if as a result of the exploitation of such advantages the rest of the working class suffer. Accusations have been levelled about the alleged lack of responsibility on the part of working people. It has been established again and again that irresponsibility is the outstanding characteristic of the employing class, whereas the workers have always given great consideration to the true well-being of the whole community.

Much is being made in these days of so-called unconstitutional stoppages—the effect of which is infinitesimal when set against the total productivity of the nation. To deny that there have been instances born of frustration which have resulted in unnecessary unconstitutional stoppages would be futile. In the main, however, even these so-called unconstitutional strikes have a basis. Workers living from week to week on current wages, upon which their families depend, do not like to forego those wages unless they feel a deep justification for so doing. The exaggeration of uncontitutional stoppages has a purpose. It is not only to justify legislation to prevent such stoppages—the final aim of the employing class is to prevent constitutional stoppages, *i.e.*, to prevent the trade unions from utilising given situations to establish favourable bargains for the securing of improved working and living conditions for the workers and their families. The Trade Unions can never give up the right to Strike in furthering their negotiations for better agreements, nor can they be diverted from this aim by becoming consenting parties to the prevention by Law even of so-called unconstitutional stoppages. This is the inherent right of the working class in capitalist society and it must be preserved at all costs, even by the utilisation of the Strike weapon for this purpose.

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PEACEMAKING: NEW PHASE

IVOR MONTAGU

THE World Assembly for Peace at Helsinki, 1955, was quite different from the First World Congress of the Defenders of Peace in Paris, 1949, from the Second, at Warsaw, 1950, and even from the People's Congress for Peace, Vienna, 1952.

It represents a big step, a new stage in peacemaking.

The Congresses of 1949 and 1950 were Congresses of the *movement*. That is to say, they were Congresses hammering out policy for the activists, or as it is variously translated, defenders, or partisans, of peace.

The Vienna Congress of 1952 was already something wider. Not a Congress of the movement, its attendance was already very much more comprehensive, including numerous personalities and delegates—the names Nitti and Sartre come to mind—who had no connection at all with the movement, either organisationally or from the viewpoint of acceptance of its policy decisions, but who from the moment of their acceptance of invitations to participate shared equal right of preparation, determination of procedure and agenda, general management of the Congress.

Formally, the Helsinki Assembly corresponded to the Vienna Congress rather than to the two earlier ones. But it was in its content and proceedings that it represented such a striking new departure. Vienna, for example, took place under the shadow of slaughter grim and actual and threatening to expand. The gathering of delegates and personalities, from within and without the movement, were concerned with discovering and emphasizing their unity, rather than exploring their diversity—a unity found speedily over the need to end immediately the war in Korea. Full stop. No reservation or qualification. And the same with the war in Vietnam. The influence of this determination undoubtedly played its part in influencing the concessions and compromises necessary for that object to be achieved.

Helsinki was quite new, in two respects: the argument, the serious debate, the exploration of alternatives that took place on various subjects—as though all present were engaged in a practical investigation of the possibilities of co-existence, not merely of systems and nations but of people and ideas; and the much greater attention than ever before devoted to the constructive possibilities of peaceful co-operation between the nations.

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It would not be true to say that the movement had hitherto concentrated exclusively on political questions, on the means of stopping and preventing war. For a very long time it has studied questions such as those involved in the removal of barriers between the nations, commercial and cultural exchange and the like, but it has to some extent been the case that these have been seen primarily in their context as contributory to the reduction of international tension. But at Helsinki not only did the idea of co-operation pervade the discussion of many of the strictly political questions, such as disarmament and security, but a commission on a subject relatively untouched at previous gatherings—the economic and social commission, presided over by Josue de Castro, attracted the largest participation of any of the seven commissions.

Does this mean that the participants at Helsinki estimated that the danger of war had passed, that peace activists could, with easy conscience, safely avert their attention to purely constructive tasks? Certainly not. Before the whole gathering was the central menace of the nuclear-weapon situation, the political discussions were fully laden with awareness of the potential dangers, in the West, of German remilitarisation; in the East, of the American military lodgement in Taiwan. The emphasis on construction and co-operation reflected not a complacency or a passivity toward such dangers, but a common assumption so general and profound that it hardly seemed worth arguing about or even proclamation—the sense of the folly, the impossibility, of the policy of cold war, of division into blocs, of seeking to make one bloc, policy or viewpoint prevail; the sense of the necessity for mankind, living on the edge of a man-made volcano, to seek common paths toward welfare and security, policies of general advantage and universal application.

The significance of this, as it might be called, keynote of the Assembly, was that it arose quite unplanned, unguided; the proceedings, as at Vienna, were determined for the occasion by those present and not according to any premeditated conception. It simply reflected the mood of those present, representative of the thoughts and feelings of the extremely varied groupings of peace activists from whom they came. To sum up in one phrase—people are sick of the cold war, and they are impatient of any obstacle, any delay, and any pretext that hinders them from immediately coming together and tackling the problems of peace and progress as a joint concern.

A word here about the widening of the participation. This was particularly marked from South America, the Middle East, Asia

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generally and Japan. Senators, physicists, doctors, diplomats, religious leaders, generals, added in profusion to the writers, artists, trade unionists, who have often attended such conferences before, brought representation of many countries up to the nationally worthy character that has hitherto been mainly notable only in the Soviet, Chinese and People's Democracy delegations. The old left-wing preponderance has vanished from many of the national participations. The greeting messages from M. Herriot, General Cardenas, Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru and Queen Elisabeth of the Belgians not inaptly mirrored the balance among the newcomers. From Europe the most interesting and fertile new contributors were representatives of French right-wing parliamentary groups and Scandinavian pacifists. Attendances were strongly up, from Canada and Australia. International bodies represented for the first time, apart from religious organs, included the International Red Cross and the United Nations Association. The chief remaining gaps are: from Africa and other colonial areas where repression and discouragement prevents any attendance except from those whose militancy is enough to overcome the most ruthless obstacles to arrival; from U.S.A., of the pacific sentiments of whose people all participating are very much aware but ideas from which have to be introduced at second-hand owing to passport prohibitions; and the Social Democrat and Labour parliamentarians respectively from Germany and Britain, whose absence, under self-imposed restriction, appears more and more grotesque, self-isolatory and incomprehensible to their many personal friends and political parallels from far-off lands such as India, Japan, Chile, Brazil.

Now, some examination of the discussions. It was noteworthy that, for the first time in the history of the movement, argument in every case centred around initiating contributions from personalities outside it: disarmament and the H-bomb, from Bertrand Russell; European security, from the French neutralist parliamentarians (Capitant, Vallon, etc.); aid to undeveloped countries, from de Castro; the character of the peace movement and the faults of Communists, the Rev. Candy of Canada.

Russell's plea against nuclear weapons, with its initial proposals for a declaration of scientists followed by a conference of scientists to force the facts to public attention, received the full and unanimous support of the Assembly. Argument around it was less inclined to take exception to his advocacy of world federal government as the sole ultimate solution—for he himself emphasizes the ultimate character of this proposal and its dependence for practicality on

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the growth of confidence among nations deriving from their increased co-operation meanwhile, and there was plenty of common ground available for immediate action leaving this question of ultimate destination for subsequent argument in the light of experience *en route*—than to his presentation on certain aspects of the existing dangers. The view shared by Russell and some scientists that H-bombs can utterly destroy human life on this planet is strongly qualified by others who, in Professor Joliot-Curie's formulation, hold that this may be *technically* conceivable, but that in practice to become feasible it would require devotion of human and material resources on such a scale that mankind will never stand for it, and that to fail to emphasize this aspect is to encourage passive acquiescence in mankind and so create the danger that one seems to be warning against. Further, Russell's prediction that all war will become atomic war—no doubt well-meant as a warning of what is undeniably a danger—is not only inconsistent with experience (protest against use of nuclear weapons ended the war in Korea and Vietnam before the bombs were used), but is already misused by those who want to use the bomb to justify their present preparations and could in the future be misused by them to justify first use of nuclear weapons on any occasion of hostilities, since 'sooner or later the other fellow will use them'.

The report finally adopted by the Commission on this subject was far more comprehensive than any past product of the movement and removes many misconceptions to which these latter have been subject: it makes quite clear that the out and out condemnation of nuclear weapons does not imply approval of war by other means, acknowledges that elimination of nuclear weapons is possible only in a framework of general reduction of armaments, and agrees that any scheme for the latter must include the weapons thought to favour any one group of nations just as those thought to favour any other group.

Ehrenburg argued against the neutralism advocated by the French parliamentarians, in favour of a general security agreement in Europe maintained by the guarantee and participation of all. While any country not participating in an aggressive bloc could, he said, always be sure of the sympathy and understanding of the U.S.S.R., circumstances today were such that no country could ensure its security simply by 'contracting out'; a positive policy actively contributing to peace was indispensable. To this Pierre Cot made an interesting reply. He did not believe the neutralists were against collective security, he said, they only posed neutralism as a half-way

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house escaping from the policy of blocs. And he suggested that a real general security arrangement for Europe, with East and West participating, would help to normalise the political position and end the internal crisis in such a country as France; *e.g.*, the obstacle to a progressive parliamentary bloc of Popular Front character would be removed, because no longer would the question of support or otherwise for the Atlantic Pact prevent internal co-operation.

Had any participant in the Assembly been in any doubt about the epoch-making character of the conference of Bandung, the discussions both on security and on sovereignty would have disillusioned him. The principles of the Bandung conference ran like a thread through every speech and proposal emanating from any Asian or African delegate. The pride in this event, held without a blessing (and despite some curses) from the self-appointed 'tutors' of Europe and America, shows its character as an historic turning point, and is redoubled by pride in the fact that it declared principles —as no conference with the empire-leaders participating has ever done—offering a model formula for co-existence.

Certain matters aroused no argument. No spokesman, it is true, could be found to oppose China's assumption of its place in the United Nations; none to defend the American position over Taiwan. Nor any to defend the denial of human rights and the rights of self-determination in the colonial system. There are certain matters on which the jury-verdict of world public opinion is already clear. A Lyttelton or an Ormsby-Gore can proclaim the virtues of the colonial system to an audience of peers who share the profits of it, but not he nor anyone could any better make a reasoned defence of it before its victims than a thief could justify theft from the dock or Goering Auschwitz at Nuremberg. It is extremely interesting that the colonial system, in this day and age, has reached this company of the 'indefensibles'. It depends on no reason, logic, or moral system acceptable to the impartial, but already only on naked force. The peace movement gives no signal, plan or stimulus for the overthrow of imperialism. The facts of injustice brought by the colonial peoples, of denial of enjoyment of rights that every metropolitan delegate takes for granted as his own entitlement, say it sufficiently without any need of subversion. The responsibility, where violence arises in the effort to maintain the unmaintainable, is plain enough.

Extremely interesting, and out of proportion to their numbers, was the influence exercised by pacifists among the delegates, members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Society of Friends, War Resisters' International and various churches. They played an ex-

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HIROSHIMA

So terribly burned they cannot

On August 6, 1945, the Atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. 410,000 men, women and children were destroyed, horribly. Two Japanese artists, Maruki and Akamatsu, horrified by this disaster, dedicated themselves to the portrayal of the catastrophe,

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ieir arms to touch their bodies

that the meaning of Hiroshima should be made known to the whole world. A number of their great and moving panels are now on exhibition in this country. These are two of the many hundreds of drawings they made in preparation for the panels.

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tremely healthy part in the arguments in the Commission on Disarmament and on Co-operation of Forces for Peace. They argued, and won their point on, recognition of the right of conscientious objection to military service by securing in the latter Commission demand for recognition by all of the right of everyone to oppose war in the way that seems proper to his conscience. And they met and adopted a resolution saying that many among them had hesitated about taking part in the Assembly but were convinced that it was worth-while; that pacifists are duty bound to go where large sections of the world's people see their ideas on maintaining peace and a just society represented; and that they believed that a spiritual development is taking place in the World Peace Movement as a result of its collaboration in a constructive sense with personalities who believe in principles of non-violence.

In addition to those already mentioned, there were Commissions on Cultural Exchange and on the Education of Youth.

Statistics on the representation have been recorded as follows: 1,640 delegates and 201 observers and guests from 68 countries. Of these, 1,404 men, 437 women. Two hundred and forty-seven were under 30 years of ago. Composition included: 72 ministers of religion, 146 members of parliaments, 57 peasants, 74 business men and landowners, 94 barristers, 108 artists, actors and film workers, 140 teachers, 145 scientists and doctors, 146 poets and writers, 149 journalists, 162 non-manual workers, 354 industrial workers and trade unionists.

The above impressions have been designed to give some idea of the *flavour* of Helsinki. Its substance can only be got from study of its documents, the address to the Big Four meeting and the reports of commissions. Herein there is meat for the peace movement in the coming months.

Turn our eyes outward from Helsinki for a moment. The Four Powers have begun the negotiations which for so long were declared to be a fantasy of peacemongers. The shooting wars in Korea and Vietnam have been stopped (and stopped without the warmongers having dared to use nuclear weapons). Peaceful co-existence is an axiom that no statesman dares gainsay as his objective. (The *Daily Telegraph* bewailed the weakness of British Prime Ministers in accepting the phrases of our movement.) The peril and infamy of nuclear weapons is being admitted by voices far from us (and who once looked forward to their use). Everything testifies to the power of the ideas of peace, the longing for peace shared by all peoples, active demands for peace, in fact that movement of humanity for

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peace, crossing all frontiers and obstacles, which is an entire novelty in human affairs and of which the World Peace Movement is the chief organised expression.

Have we not ground for optimism? Yes, an optimism correctly founded on the realisation of our strength, but justified if we realise that despite our progress the dangers are *not* yet dissipated, the obstruction to peace remains stubborn, the only road there is the road we have so far traversed, that is, the tireless and determined action for peace of the masses strengthening the good statesman (whomever he be) and thwarting the bad (whomever he be).

Nuclear weapons still exist. There are political and military leaders determined to maintain them. Reactionaries are still determined to prevent a European settlement. Adenauer, with strong backing, is resolved to prevent a German settlement (for any unification would destroy his precarious majority). The American military leaders are resolved to develop their threat to China. The dream of world victory for a bloc has not been abandoned.

The job is only begun. It will be done only when all who are against war and for peace learn to act together. But Helsinki is a big stride forward in learning that lesson.

LABOUR "RETHINKERS"

JAMES KLUGMANN

WHY did the Labour Party lose the elections, and what should be done about it? These are the problems discussed in the articles by nine Labour M.P.s published in the *Star* at the beginning of June. It is natural and necessary that these questions should be thrashed out in every section of the Labour movement. 'Rethinking,' as it is called, is very good and very healthy. But you can 'rethink' forwards or you can 'rethink' backwards and insofar as the *Star* articles point in any common direction—it is *backwards* and nowhere else.

Traditional reformism has always quarrelled with Marxism on the issue of the *road* to socialism. But right-wing Labour today goes a step further. It renounces (even in words) the goal of socialism, or else it revises the definition of socialism so that there is nothing left. Just as the bourgeoisie looks with horror today at its own offspring—bourgeois democracy—so social democracy looks with anguish at its own never so moderate 'principles' of the past.

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All the right-wing 'rethinking' since the election failure has been to revise and cast out the 'objectionable' and 'outdated' clause 4 of the *Party Objects*—'to secure for the workers by hand or brain the full fruits of their industry . . . upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange'. The main 'rethoughts' of the *Star* are no exception. The Rt. Hon. Patrick Gordon Walker denounces the 'outworn type of radicalism completely irrelevant to the mentality of our modern electorate'. The essence of modern socialism, he proclaims, is 'a proper degree of planning . . . we must re-examine the definition of the Party objects'. George Brown redefines socialism as 'real and effective equality of opportunity: social justice: an end to the power of privilege and inherited wealth; and a productive effort selective enough to support a high and rising standard of living fairly distributed'. Tom O'Brien calls on us 'to cut out once and for all the outdated slogans and shibboleths of the past', which means in the first place the 'shibboleth' of the common ownership of the means of production. All that the pioneers of socialism have fought for is thrown away as outdated, the baby poured out with the bathwater, and a new product advertised, which Scotchmen will appreciate, whisky without the alcohol. This, they say, will enthuse the voting public, but I must express my doubts.

Mr. Shinwell in his contribution is very upset by Tom O'Brien's rejection of all the old socialist slogans—'after reading his article I see no reason why there should be a Labour Party at all. The Tory Party can do all that he seems to want without any help from the Labour Party.' True enough! 'If the Labour Party abandons its socialist objective it has no future as a progressive political force in our country.' True enough! But what is socialism for him? 'Socialist principles,' he writes, 'have been steadily injected into our national affairs for nearly half a century, and not always by Labour governments. . . . This is a world trend even in the United States. . . . Was not the provision of a National Health Service one of the first examples of socialism?' Here in all its pristine purity is one of the oldest of reformist illusions—that socialism can be built within the framework of the capitalist economy and the capitalist state, that every measure of reform forced on capitalism by the working class movement is a measure of socialism, that socialism can be grafted on to capitalism piecemeal and step by step. So Mr. Eden will, just as Mr. Churchill before him, develop the world trend of socialism, like the great corporations of America. To use his own words, if the Tories are socialists and America is going socialist,

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'I can see no reason why there should be a Labour Party at all'.

Surely if there is any lesson to be learnt from the Labour failure at the last elections it is precisely this—that when the right-wing 'rethinkers' begin to cast off and reject the 'outworn shibboleths' or traditional aims of socialism and the social ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, they doom Labour to inevitable defeat. If Labour policy is to be imperialism abroad and defence of capitalism at home, who can be trusted better than the Tories to carry it out? Right-wing 'rethinking' gave birth to the *Challenge to Britain*, a model programme for losing elections. It elaborated the immediate electoral programme which succeeded in the complete omission of the word socialism. One million and a half votes were lost on this programme, and the most that the stars of the *Star* can do if they are successful is to lose another million.

The first great lesson of the electoral defeat, surely, is that it is a return to the aims of socialism that is needed and not their rejection. A fight for socialism and not its abandonment.

The same line of right-wing 'rethinking' is pursued in the *Star* with regard to the question of nationalisation. 'You have had a go at nationalisation,' most of them say, 'It's not what you thought it would be. So let's give it up or at least stop trying to extend it'. Once again as the Morrison-Gaitskell line is pursued in renouncing socialism, so the line of Mr. Geddes and the General Council of the T.U.C. is followed on the issue of nationalisation. 'Nationalisation,' proclaims Gordon Walker, 'for its own sake seems a rigid and doctrinaire idea'. The workers in the nationalised industries, declares Tom O'Brien, 'didn't see the changes which decades of propaganda led them to expect. . . . Many see, not industrial self-government, but state capitalism'.

You see the argument—'you wanted something, you didn't get it, so try something else'. It's perfectly true that the form of nationalisation that was achieved under the Labour government was as different from the dreams of the miners and railwaymen who pioneered for it as chalk is from cheese. They wanted the working class to take over the key industries and they were given state capitalism. But far from being a reason for renouncing the original aim, *the point is to fight for it harder than ever*. The real lesson of the electoral defeat is not the rejection of nationalisation, but a fight for its immediate improvement within the framework of capitalism (cut in compensation, democratisation of the Boards, rise in living

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standards, ending the cheap services to the private capitalists) and its extension to the main industries of Britain, together with the long-term fight for a real socialist nationalisation which can only come with the ending of capitalism in Britain. Whittle down nationalisation like most of the *Star* writers or wave it away with a wand and look for an invisible alternative, and you are inviting the Tories to remain indefinitely in office and leaving capitalism intact. It's only by fighting for its extension and transformation that you can win the enthusiastic support of the workers inside and outside the nationalised industries, and rally both old and new forces to the standard of Labour.

Chronic to all right-wing 'rethinking' from the *Challenge to Britain* to most of the *Star* performers is the acceptance of the cold war as a permanent factor of society, the omission of or the belittlement of the struggle for peace which is the most deeply felt aspiration of the people of Britain. 'Far more important in the socialist scheme of things,' writes Mr. Shinwell, 'than persistent belly-aching about German rearmament or whether we should manufacture the H-bomb, are the extension of our Health Service, more provision for the aged, clearance of slums, free education. . . .' etc., etc.

But this argument is at best foolish, at worst dishonest. 'Belly-aching' about peace, or rather the imposition of peace by the working class on an unwilling Tory government is overwhelmingly the most important issue that confronts the people in Britain today. It is the fight for peace, for German unity, for banning the H-bomb, for reduction in armaments, for Great Power understanding, negotiation, co-operation, that alone will win the enthusiastic support of the people, and rally both former Labour and Tory voters to Labour. 'We must be far more visibly different from the Tories than we have been,' writes Mr. Gordon Walker. But how on earth will Labour be visibly different from the Tories if it is visibly supporting the Tory policy of cold war? How can the voters see an invisible difference? And that is not all! How can you honestly counterpose social advances, lower prices, higher pensions, better health, housing, education to the fight for peace, when it is the cold war that is the most essential reason for the attack on social services and on living standards?

Two further themes of right-wing 'rethinking' run through many of the *Star* articles. The first is to put the blame for the electoral defeat on 'the left' and to call for strong disciplinary measures against them. Mrs. Bessie Braddock urges the 'tightening of disci-

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pline'. It is not only the question of the right-wing trying to put on others' shoulders the blame that is essentially theirs, but the danger is that for them 'unity' means the imposition of *their* will, of their line on the militant majority in the Labour movement just as Dulles sees 'peace' as the imposition of N.A.T.O., S.E.A.T.O., etc., on the peoples of the world.

The second theme is *organisation*. 'The Tories won because they were better organised.' 'The key to the future is more agents and more organisers'. (Gordon Walker, George Brown, John Dugdale). That the organisation of the Labour Party could be improved of course no-one would seek to deny, but no amount of 'overhaul of the Party machine' (George Brown) can be a substitute for the leadership of the struggle against capitalism or the fight for a policy of peace and socialism. 'Why did we lose?' asks John Dugdale, and he answers: 'it was first and foremost because thousands of Labour supporters just did not bother to go and vote'. But why, after four years of Toryism, did they refuse to go to the polls? And this is the real issue which is not answered by any of the *Star* contributors.

A policy that supports imperialism abroad and the maintenance of capitalism at home cannot win the enthusiastic support of former Labour voters and still more cannot win former Tory voters to give their allegiance to Labour. If offered a fundamentally Tory policy by two parties, the electors who want it will obviously prefer to support the *official* Tory Party. The right-wing 'rethinking' that has followed the elections puts forward lines that would only lead to still greater defeats. What is needed is a radical 'rethinking' on the left. For it is a policy of peace, of struggle on living conditions and social services, with a clear programme of advance, and a clear socialist perspective that alone can rally the Labour movement. It is not a question of how to behave as an *opposition* for the next five years (George Brown) but of developing a struggle that can get rid of the Tory Government.

Unity is required, but not the unity of the right wing through disciplinary imposition of bans and proscriptions, but a unity of all sections of the Labour movement, trade unions, co-operatives, Labour Party and Communist Party in developing the struggle now against capitalism in home and foreign affairs and in putting forward a clear perspective of advance to socialism. 'Rethinking' is needed —but forwards, not backwards.

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UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF FREDERICK ENGELS

[*Of the highest interest for all students of politics and the Labour movement is the discovery in France of a correspondence between Frederick Engels and the Lafargues (Laura Lafargue, the daughter of Karl Marx, and her husband Paul, a leader of the French Socialists and a Marxist writer of high repute). The correspondence amounts to 551 letters, of which nearly half are by Engels. Seventy-one of them had been made available by the widow of the late Dr. Edgar Longuet, son of Marx's eldest daughter Jenny. The rest, amounting to 480 letters, came from the great-grandson of Marx, Marcel Charles Longuet. Students of Marxism will recall the enormous interest aroused by the original publication in 1913 of the Marx-Engels letters and Lenin's preface to their translation into Russian. But in the case of the Lafargues-Engels correspondence the existence of most of these letters was unknown till a few months ago when by a piece of good luck they were discovered. While the letters run from 1868, the main body deals especially with French and British politics (as well as domestic affairs) from 1882 to 1895 and are written for the most part in English to Laura Lafargue with others in French to her husband. The Paris publishing house* Editions Sociales *is bringing out in three volumes these 551 letters, and reprinting 26 letters already published, making 577 in all. Of this total 93 were from Engels to Paul, 141 to Laura; 235 were from Paul to Engels, 108 from Laura to Engels. The first volume will appear in the late autumn of this year. The French review* La Pensée *has in its May-June issue printed extracts dealing specifically with the historic crisis in the French Republic with the attempt of General Boulanger to restore the monarchy, a crisis which might have led to European war.* Editions Sociales *to whom we extend our grateful acknowledgements, have placed at the disposal of* Labour Monthly *a series of the letters to Laura dealing mainly with British questions. These begin in the month of the Dock Strike of 1889. They deal with it : and also with the foundation Congress of the Socialist International, where William Morris represented British Socialists, while H. M. Hyndman attended a rival congress called by the right-wing Possibilists, who were linked up with French capitalist groupings. The letters throw a vivid light on the labour movement in the early 'nineties, and give a penetrating analysis of the opportunism of the right-wing trade union leaders and the sec-*

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tarianism of the Hyndman-dominated leadership of the Social Democratic Federation. Of particular interest is Engels' description of how the workers flocked to the first May Day in 1890 and of his own participation in it. The publication by Labour Monthly *of these English letters of Engels begins in this issue; and is therefore a most fitting commemoration of his death, on August 5, 1895, sixty years ago.—Ed., L.M.*]

4, Cavendish Place,
Eastbourne.
Aug. 27, 1889.

MY DEAR LAURA,

That letter writing at the sea side is well nigh an impossibility, I thought you knew long since. And if as in my case, a lot of people whom I never saw seem to have conspired to overwhelm me with letters, visits, inquiries, requests of all sorts, the impossibility becomes a complete fact. Austrian student-clubs, a Viennese inquirer after 'truth' who wishes to know had he not better devour Hegel (better not, I replied) a Roumanian Socialist *in propria persona* [in person]*, an unknown man from Berlin now in London etc. etc., all have come down at once upon me and all expect to be attended to at once. So, with six people around me in the room whither they are but too often driven by rain, nothing remains for me but to retire from time to time to my bedroom and to turn that into my 'office'.

You had your adventures with Seraphine, Nim† had hers with Ellen. Which Ellen having been long suspected by the knowing ones was one morning reported by the doctor to be six months gone in the way all flesh comes into the world and had consequently to leave—about a month before we came here. When we return there will be fresh engagement of some one—perhaps worse.

I am glad Paul is off on his election trip and moreover with funds from his Mamma. Of the three put up for Marseilles, one, perhaps two may get in; I hope Paul may be one. But anyhow it is a distinct step in advance to have once been put up as candidate for the party, and facilitates further moves; especially with a rising party as ours at this moment undoubtedly is in France, once a candidate generally means always a candidate.

*Square brackets denote either translation of foreign words or where letters are missing in Engels' MSS.

†In these letters there are repeated references to members or close associates of the Marx family by their first names or nicknames. Thus, Nim is Helene Demuth, housekeeper for the Marx family and Engels. Paul is Paul Lafargue (1845-1911), son-in-law of Marx and one of the founders of the French Socialist Party. Tussy is Eleanor (1853-1898), the youngest daughter of Marx. Edward is Aveling (1851-1898), husband of Eleanor and an early member of the Socialist League. Pumps is Mary Ellen Burns, niece of Engels' wife and married to Percy Rosher.

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I do hope Boulangism[1] will come to grief next elections. Nothing worse could happen to us than even a *succès d'estime* of that humbug which might prolong, at least, the apparent dilemma: either Boulanger or Ferry[2]—a dilemma which alone gives vitality to either scoundrel. If Boulanger got well thrashed, and his following reduced more or less, to the Bonapartists, it would prove that this Bonapartist vein in the French character—explicable by the inheritance from the great Revolution—is gradually dying out. And with the elimination of this incident the regular development of French republican evolution would *reprendre son cours* [resume its course]; the Radicals would, in their new incarnation Millerand,[3] gradually discredit themselves as much as in the incarnation Clemenceau,[4] and the better elements among them pass over to us; the Opportunists would lose their last pretext for political existence, that of being at least defenders of the republic against pretenders; the liberties conquered by the Socialists would not only be maintained but gradually extended, so that our party would be in a better position for fighting its way than anywhere else on the Continent; and the greatest danger of war would be removed. To believe as the Boulangeo-Blanquists do that by sustaining Boulanger they can get a few seats in Parliament is worthy of these ignorant *purs* [Simon Pures] who would burn down a village in order to fry a cotolette. It is to be hoped that this experience will do Vaillant[5] good. He knows perfectly what sort of fellows the mass of those Blanquists are, and his delusions as to the work to be got out of such materials must have received a severe shock.

Hyndman's[6] campaign with regard to the discredit to be thrown on the Marxist credentials seems to have utterly broken down. Burns'[7] disclosures were a ready blow, and our further revelations especially about the Austrian Possibilist credentials did the rest. These people never know what a glass house they are living in themselves. And as in France the Possibilists seem to have kept quiet with regard to that point (these fellows are far cleverer than Hyndman & Co.—in their small way) there will be no further necessity to follow up the victory unless fresh attempts are made. The whole trick was calculated for the British market, and there it has failed—*cela suffit*. Then there is the resolution about the 1st of May demonstration[8]. That is the best thing our congress did. That will tell immensely here in England, and the Hyndman lot *dare not oppose it;* if they do, they ruin themselves, if they don't, they must follow in our wake; let them choose.

Another great fact is the Dock Labourers' strike. They are as

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you know the most miserable of all the *miserable* of the East End, the broken down ones of all trades, the lowest stratum above the Lumpenproletariat. That these poor famished broken down creatures who bodily fight amongst each other every morning for admission to work, should organise for resistance, turn out 40-50,000 strong, draw after them into the strike all and every trade of the East End in anyway connected with shipping, hold out above a week, and terrify the wealthy and powerful dock companies —that is a revival I am proud *erlebt zu haben* [to have lived to see]. And they have even bourgeois opinion on their side: the merchants who suffer severely from this interruption of traffic, do not blame the workmen, but the obstinate Dock companies. So that if they hold out another week they are almost sure of victory.

And all this strike is worked and led by *our* people, by Burns and Mann, and the Hyndmanistes are nowhere in it.

My dear Laura I am almost sure you are in want of some cash and I should have sent a cheque with this if I was not myself hard up. My balance at the bank is at the lowest ebb, a dividend of some £33.– due generally about the 18th August has not yet been paid and Edward has borrowed £15.– till end of month, as he was quite fast. So I have hardly room to turn round in, but as soon as I receive a supply I shall remit; at latest next Monday, I hope before.

Domela[9] becomes quite incomprehensible. Is he perhaps after all not Jesus Christ but Jan van Leiden? *Le prophete de Meyerbeer?*[10] Vegetarianism and solitary confinement seem apt to produce queer results in the long run.

Edward and Tussy will be going to Dundee to report Trades Union Congress and then we shall get the boys here in the mean time.

Ever yours

F. ENGELS.

Sept. 1, 1889, Sunday.

MY DEAR LAURA,

Yesterday evening late I had news from my bank that the long expected dividend of £36.– has been paid in and so I hasten to send you a cheque for £30.–, ten of which are the second half of the money I promised Paul for his electioneering expenses and for which he applied in a letter, to hand here last Friday, from Cette. His prospects in the town seem good but then Cette is but small

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and the country votes will decide—hope I shall hear more from him in a few days. Let's hope for the best.

Cannot write much being Sunday and our people always in and out, moreover have to write to Tussy about the strike which was in an important crisis yesterday. As the dock directors kept stubborn, our people were led to a very foolish resolution. They had outstripped their means of relief and had to announce that on Saturday no relief could be dealt out to strikers. In order to make this go down—that is the way at least I take it—they declared that if the dock directors had not caved in by Saturday noon, on Monday there would be a general strike—reckoning chiefly on the supposition that the Gas works for want of coal or of workmen or both would come to a stand and London be in darkness—and this threat was to terrify all into submission to the demands of the men.

Now this was playing *va banque,* staking £1,000.– to win, possibly, £10.–; it was threatening more than they could carry out; it was creating millions of hungry mouths for no reason but because they had some tens of thousands on hand which they could not feed; it was casting away wilfully all the sympathies of the shopkeepers and even of the great mass of the bourgeoisie who all hated the dock monopolists, but who now would at once turn against the workmen; in fact it was such a declaration of despair, and such a desperate game that I wrote to Tussy at once; if this is persisted in, the Dock Co's have only to hold out till Wednesday and they will be victorious.

Fortunately they have thought better of it. Not only has the threat been 'provisionally' withdrawn but they have even acceded to the demands of the wharfingers (in some respect competitors of the docks), have reduced their demands for an increase of wages, and *this has again been rejected* by the Dock Companies. This I think will secure them the victory. The threat with the general strike will now have a salutary effect, and the generosity of the workmen, both in withdrawing it and in acceding to a compromise, will secure them fresh sympathy and help.

On Friday we shall return to London. Schorl.[11] has left about a fortnight ago for Germany, where he is now, what he is doing and what his intentions are I don't know.

As to Boulanger his weakness is shown in his electoral proceedings: he takes Paris and leaves to the monarchists all the provinces. That ought to disabuse his most obstinate adherents if they pretend to be Republicans. Paul wrote to me that a Marseilles Boulangist has owned to him that B[oulanger] has had

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from the Russian government 15 millions. That explains the whole dodge. The Russian dynasty, now allied by Denmark to the Orléans, wishes for an Orléans restauration and *one brought about by Russia;* for then the Orléans would be its slaves. And only with a monarchical France can the Czar have a sincere alliance, such as he requires for a long war with dubious chances. To bring this about, B[oulanger] is put forward as the tool. If he is successful as a stepping stone to monarchy, he will, at the proper time, be bought off or in case of need put out of the way for the Russian government will not have in that case the scruples which our socialists have: *'denn die abzumurken ist uns Wurscht'* ['killing them off doesn't worry us'] is their motto. As to Millerand I believe you are right. In his paper there is, for all its attempted radicalism, a tone of weakness, half-despondency, and above all so much of the milk of human kindness (stale as it is it has not the stuff in it to turn sour) that compared even with *La Justice*[12] as I have once known that paper, it inspires pity mingled with a drop of contempt. And these be the successors of the old French Republicans, *les fils des héros de la rue Saint-Méry !*[13]

Love from Nim and all the lot here.

Ever yours

F.E.

London, May 10, 1890.

MY DEAR LAURA,

Only a few lines this busy Saturday—I am awfully behind-hand with my correspondence—to thank you for your card and to enclose the £20.- cheque I promised Paul. I also send you the *People's Press*[14] with report of Sunday last. It was tremendous. England at last *is* stirring, and no mistake. And it was a great victory for *us* specially, for Tussy and Aveling who with the help of the Gas Workers (by far the best Union out amongst the new ones) have done it all. In their naïveté they had called in the Trades Council without ensuring to themselves the possession of the Park first. The Trades Council allying itself with Hyndman and Co, stole a march on them, and applied for platforms for Sunday at the Office of Works and got them, thus hoping to shut us out and being able to command; they attempted at once to bully us down, but Edward went to the Office of Works and got us too 7 platforms—had the Liberals been in, we should never have got them. That brought the other side down at once, and they became as amiable as you

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please. They have seen they have to do with different people from what they expected. I can assure you I looked a couple of inches taller when I got down from that old lumbering waggon that served as a platform—after having heard again, for the first time since 40 years, the unmistakeable voice of the English Proletariat. That voice has been heard by the bourgeois too, the whole press of London and the provinces bears witness to that.

Paul spoke very well—a slight indication of the Universal strike dream in it, which nonsense Guesde[15] has retained from his Anarchist days—(whenever we are in a position to *try* the universal strike, we shall be able to get what we want for the mere asking for it, without the roundabout way of the universal strike). But he spoke very well, and in remarkably grammatical English too, far more so than in his conversation. He was received best of all, and got a more enthusiastic cheer at the end than any one else. And his presence was very opportune as we had on our platform two or three philistine speakers *qui faisaient dormir debout leurs auditeurs* [who made their hearers fall asleep on their feet], so that Paul had to waken them up again.

The progress made in England these last 10-15 months is immense. Last May the 8 hours working day would not have brought as many *thousands* into Hyde Park as we had *hundreds of thousands*. And the best of it is that the struggle preceding the demonstration has brought to life a representative body which will serve as the nucleus for the movement, *en dehors de toute secte* [outside all sects]; the Central Committee consisting of delegates of the Gas Workers and numerous other Unions—mostly small, *unskilled* Unions and therefore despised by the haughty Trades Council of the aristocracy of labour—and of the Radical clubs worked for the last two years by Tussy. Edward is chairman of this Committee. This Com. will continue to act and invite all other Trade, political and socialist societies to send delegates, and gradually expand into a central body not only for the 8 hours Bill but for all other revendications—say, to begin with, the rest of the Paris resolutions and so on. The Com. is strong enough numerically not to be swamped by any fresh accessions, and thus the sects will soon be put before the dilemma either to merge in it and in the general movement or to die out. *It is the East End* which now commands the movement and these fresh elements, unspoiled by the 'Great Liberal Party' show an intelligence such as—well I cannot say better than such as we find in the equally unspoiled German workmen. They will not have any but Socialist leaders.[16]

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Well now make up your mind and put your house in order so as to be here before the month is out. Let us know when it will be most convenient to you. We only hope that by then the present miserable weather will have exhausted itself. Yesterday we had fires all day again!

Ever yours,

Love from Nim. F. ENGELS.

REFERENCES

[1]Named after General G. E. Boulanger, war minister in 1886, who in alliance with the monarchists prepared a *coup d'état*, but had to flee from France and committed suicide in 1891.

[2]Jules Ferry (1832-1893), Conservative Republican leader in France who organised the military expeditions for the conquest of Tunis, Madagascar and Tonking.

[3]A. Millerand (1859-1943), French renegade from socialism, notorious as the first socialist to enter a bourgeois cabinet.

[4]G. Clemenceau (1841-1929), French Radical politician and journalist, Premier in the first world war.

[5]E. Vaillant (1840-1915), French Socialist, Blanquist; member of the Paris Commune and the General Council of the First International. Subsequently a social chauvinist.

[6]H. M. Hyndman (1842-1921), a founder of the S.D.F. which under his leadership became a sectarian organisation. Chauvinist before the first world war, Hyndman later supported intervention against the Soviet Union.

The reference is to the First Congress of the Second International in Paris in 1889, where a French socialist splinter party, the Possibilists, held an opposition Congress at the same time as the Second International was founded. Hyndman did not go with the Marxists, but with the Possibilists.

[7]John Burns (1853-1943), Labour leader who played a big role in the famous Dock Strike of 1889. Subsequently left the labour movement and entered the Liberal Cabinet of Campbell-Bannerman in December, 1905.

[8]This refers to the resolution passed at the Congress of 1889 that May Day should be celebrated as an International Day of Solidarity all over the word.

[9]Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846-1919). Dutch Anarchist who played a role in the founding of the Second International.

[10]Opera of G. Meyerbeer (1791-1864) about the Anabaptists, one of whom was Jan van Leiden.

[11]Karl Schorlemmer (1834-1892). Chemist, Communist, Fellow of the Royal Society, Professor at Owen's College, Manchester.

[12]Radical paper founded by G. Clemenceau in Paris in 1880.

[13]This is a reference to the Jacobins.

[14]London paper which appeared during 1890-1891, edited by Robert Dell, member of the Socialist League and contributor to *Labour Monthly*.

[15]Jules Guesde (1845-1922), leader of the Marxist section of the French Socialist Party, later turned chauvinist.

[16]A full analysis of that famous May Day demonstration was given by Engels in his article in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Vienna, May 21 and 23, 1890.

(To be continued)

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Document of the Month

FOR PEACE IN MALAYA

[We print below the text of the official offer of negotiations for peace from the Malayan People's Liberation Army on May 1 sent to the British Government. The rejection by the British Government in Malaya of this peace offer was announced on June 23. The majority of the legal parties and organisations in Malaya (as evidenced both in the recent Singapore elections and in the preparations for the forthcoming Federal elections) are demanding negotiations for peace and the ending of the seven-year war Emergency Regulations. An urgent responsibility now falls on public opinion and especially on the Labour movement in Britain, to see that this offer of negotiations is taken up by the British Government so that this shameful war may be brought to an end.—Ed., L.M.]

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, am hereby authorised by the General Headquarters of the Malayan People's Liberation Army to issue the following Statement concerning the question of negotiation to end the war in Malaya and its relation to the Malayan people's desire to attain national independence:—

(1) The sole aim of our struggle is, as it has always been, to achieve a peaceful, democratic, and independent Malaya. It is, as has always been, our aim to achieve this goal by peaceful means. It is our view that the attainment of national independence in Malaya by peaceful means is beneficial not only to the people of Malaya, but to the people and the Government of Britain as well.

However, it is necessary to point out that the Government of Britain has, to this day, continued under various pretexts to maintain colonial rule in Malaya, and has adopted an indifferent attitude towards the Resolutions of the Asian-African Conference which focussed attention on the right of self-determination and on human rights of the peoples in colonial and dependent territories.

We wish to draw attention to the fact that at present, the Government of Britain has enforced a Constitution on Malaya that does not accord with the principles of self-determination and with the desires of the people. Apart from minor variations, the constitutional changes enforced on the territories of Malayan Federation and Singapore have a common, basic colonial feature. The Government of Britain, for instance, still assumes supreme control over all questions concerning national defence, foreign relations and finance. The British Governor in Singapore, and the British High Commissioner in the Federation of Malaya, still claim and exercise their power to veto any legislation which the Legislative Assembly may pass. Foreign troops are still stationed throughout the territory of Malaya and are permitted to establish and extend military bases on Malayan soil to serve the interests of foreign powers.

Unless this situation is altered, it cannot be said that Malaya has achieved independence or any real freedom. On the contrary, the continuation of such a situation jeopardises the freedom and democratic rights of the Malayan people and threatens to engulf Malaya in a war of 'Asians fighting against Asians' in the interests of foreign powers. The

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people are opposed to such a war. It is against their vital interests. They will not pay the grievous price of war which they are not permitted to question and over an issue which is opposed to their own interests and welfare. These are the hard facts of the situation which neither partial nor full Legislative Council elections instituted by the colonial authorities can conceal.

(2) For the peaceful attainment of national independence in Malaya to be real, it is necessary first and foremost, to settle the war, to abolish the Emergency Regulations, and to accord full protection for the freedom and democratic rights of the people. Only in this way can all-national elections be held in an atmosphere of peace and democracy.

All the political parties, associations, guilds, and other organisations of the people of Malaya, irrespective of class, degrees of understanding of national independence, or of their previous stand, who are sincerely struggling for national independence, can and must unite under the banner of national endeavour to attain their common goal. To that end, they will exert all their strength to secure a settlement of the war and to achieve national independence by peaceful means.

We believe that it is possible and necessary that the various political parties and associations and public representatives of the people should convene, at the earliest possible date, a round-table conference to discuss fully the problems concerning the settlement of the war and the peaceful realisation of national independence. In this way, it is possible for unanimous agreement to be reached in a way that conforms to the actual situation in Malaya, and that will help towards an early settlement of the war and the peaceful attainment of national independence. An agreement on this basis will greatly benefit the vital interests of all nationalities and all classes throughout the country.

In the event of such a conference being convened, we will accord it our active co-operation to ensure its success.

In view of the fact that the various national groups and communities in Malaya have their own particular problems, and varying degrees of political understanding, but are otherwise agreed on a common objective, it is necessary that all sections of the population should be imbued with the democratic spirit of mutual understanding and mutual respect for one another's varying viewpoints whilst unitedly pursuing their common objective. In this spirit, the round-table conference can achieve unanimity and provide a solution to the important problem.

In this respect, the results of the Asian-African Conference, and the negotiation between the Governments of Indonesia and of China which resulted in the solution of the problem of dual nationality affecting the two countries, have set the best possible example to the people of Malaya.

(3) The leaders of the Alliance of the United Malay National Organisation, the Malayan Chinese Association and the Malayan Indian Congress, have proposed 'amnesty' as a means of settling the war. We feel bound to state that this is not a satisfactory proposition. However, as a token of our sincerity for peace, and in order to facilitate an early settlement of the war, we are willing to make concessions, and to use this proposition as a basis of negotiation with the British Government. For the same reason, we are willing to negotiate with the alliance of the

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U.M.N.O., M.C.A., and M.I.C., and others who wish to settle the war by negotiation.

It is necessary to point out, however, that any attempt to lure us into surrendering will be looked upon as a breach of faith and will be doomed to failure. The realities of the present situation are as follows: That after nearly seven years, the British Government has failed to defeat us, despite all its efforts and its thousand - and - one machinations. They have failed because we have the support of the overwhelming majority of the masses. We cannot be conquered. With regard to this point, Mr. Lyttelton, the former Secretary for Colonial Affairs, had to use the term 'possible' in his speech to the British Rubber Manufacturers Association on March 24 last year. He said: 'It is possible that we will never achieve complete victory'. The complete victory which he referred to is similar to the victory in Europe and the victory over Japan. We confidently believe that the situation within and without Malaya is daily favouring the independence of Malaya. Time is on the side of the Malayan people, and is unfavourable to the rulers who try to perpetuate colonialism.

(4) Concerning the proposal to meet us in the jungle to make arrangements for a preliminary meeting of the two sides, it is our opinion that this would create many difficulties and cause inconvenience to both sides. We are willing, however, to send our representatives directly to Kuala Lumpur to discuss arrangements for negotiation, on condition that the British Government provides all necessary guarantees for the personal security and freedom of our representatives.

If the British Government agrees to discuss our proposals directly with us, or with the political parties concerned, it can at any time inform me through the radio and the newspapers. On receiving such notification, I shall proceed immediately. On our part, the door to negotiation is, as has been in the past and will be in the future, always open. In the interests of peace, we have taken a great step forward. It is now entirely up to the British Government to decide whether the proposal to negotiate will materialise.

(Signed) NG HENG,
Representative, General Headquarters, Malayan People's Liberation Army, May 1, 1955.

Stanley Bennett, who died on July 12, age 53, was an old friend of the Labour Monthly. *As a journeyman compositor he was setting the type for its early volumes: and later as master printer he gave the utmost help in the difficult post-war years of 1947 to 1952.*

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Book Reviews

PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

Peaceful Co-existence, by Andrew *Rothstein*. (192 pp. Penguin Special. *2s.*)

WHEN a new conception, or even a new word, comes into political thought, it is well that some good scholar should give the general public some explanation of it and of the background in which it has taken shape. 'Peaceful Co-existence' is, in a fashion, a new label for an old thought, for we all exist, and peace is—at any rate in theory—a normal state of international affairs; but it is clear that it has, in the years of the cold war, achieved new importance, and presents new problems, best labelled perhaps by the hint (on the cover of the book) of a fuller title for the book, 'Peaceful Co-existence or no existence'.

Rothstein, a scholar with a great knowledge and understanding of the U.S.S.R. as well as of Britain, gives a very clear explanation, comprehensible to most ordinary people, without ever becoming remote or professional; and he uses as his basis many 'hard' facts which too many people have forgotten or half forgotten. To carry conviction in such a book as this, any writer has to face a very special and peculiar problem. He is writing about the Soviet Union, and that part of the general public which it is most important for him to convince knows much less than nothing about that country. I say 'much less than nothing', for most of them have in their minds a number of assertions about the U.S.S.R. implanted by years of propaganda, not one per cent. of which is correct. Their minds are thus filled with poisonous and poisoned rubbish, and even the most honest, well-informed, and persuasive writer, before he can hope to get any true facts into them, must rid their minds of the poisonous rubbish. It becomes almost more a matter for medical or psychological curative treatment than ordinary book-writing. And, all the time, the writer must keep his temper with even the most absurd assertions; he must remember that the people for whom he is writing are people of goodwill, honesty, and intelligence, little more blameworthy for having poisoned minds than they would be for having poisoned stomachs after a misadventure with oysters. One may reflect in passing on the dangers involved in the fact that at least half the statesmen in Western Countries, who have to shape and express the policies of their countries (to the tune of several billions of dollars a day), are just as intoxicated, in the technical sense, as the average 'patient' to whom Rothstein's book is directed. Rothstein is really a good doctor; he grasps every nettle, gives a true and convincing explanation, backed by evidence, of every false assertion about the Soviet Union, and in the end the whole course of treatment is surely one that should carry conviction and cure to all but the most obstinate and deeply-poisoned cases. The book carries a few particular lessons for the less poisoned; firstly, it helps them to realise more clearly even than before that propaganda for friendly relations and understanding with the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and its allies is propaganda for peace, and for peaceful co-existence; and, secondly, that today, as in 1941-45, those who preach friendship with the U.S.S.R. are not only crystallising the true bases of peaceful and constructive foreign policies but also compelling the world in general and statesmen in particular to accept and act on those bases.

D. N. PRITT

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DR. NORMAN BETHUNE

The Scalpel, The Sword, by S. Gordon and T. Allan. (272 pp. Robert Hale. *16s.*)

IN a graceful preface to this book Madame Sun Yat Sen sums up in two sentences the outstanding characteristics of Dr. Norman Bethune. She writes: 'The hero in any age is one who carries out with a surpassing degree of devotion, determination, courage and skill the main tasks with which his times challenge every man. Today these tasks are world wide and the contemporary hero—whether he works at home or in a foreign land—is a world hero not only in historical retrospect but now'.

This exciting volume unfolds the way in which this outstanding doctor met the challenges at home in Canada and abroad in the world. His active life extends from the outbreak of war in 1914 to his too early death in China in 1939. The carnage of Flanders, in which he was severely wounded, aroused in his sensitive mind an awareness that nationally and internationally all was not well in the Western world.

On returning to Canada he qualified as a doctor, and saw much of post-war Europe when obtaining postgraduate hospital experience. The first challenge he accepted was that of mercenary medicine, and here he must have been one of the earliest advocates, in the West, of a socialised medical service. He worked relentlessly and, as so often happened at this time, tuberculosis claimed him as a victim. Vividly we see him responding to the lethargy and hopelessness which engulfed so many institutions devoted to the care of this disease. He demanded to live and he fought for and obtained successful surgery on himself. Soon he became one of the foremost advocates and practitioners of active treatment in this condition where hope was too often abandoned. A great future as a thoracic surgeon was assured for him, but world events intervened.

The challenge by Facism of the rights of Spanish Democracy found an answer from this forceful figure. He went to Spain and saw clearly the medical needs of those at the front while the suffering of civilians made an indelible impression upon him. His organisation of front line blood transfusion and subsequent surgery saved many lives and raised the morale of the heroic defenders of liberty. The struggle grew more intense and Canada, America and Britain looked on while Hitler and Mussolini poured in troops and material to crush the rising liberties of Spanish democrats. Bethune replied by tearing himself away from the wounded and conducting a coast to coast speaking tour of Canada and U.S.A. to rouse the public conscience and to obtain financial help for stricken Spain. His efforts met with much success and he was preparing to return when China called. Men of lesser calibre would have found the issue in Spain overwhelming. Bethune had a world perspective and saw the challenge by Japan to China's liberation as the greater, but related, problem.

The latter part of the book, a little over one hundred pages, tells in simple language of what this man achieved there. His approach to the stupendous problems of treating battle casualties was as direct and simple as were the tactics of the Chinese Communists and others in meeting the Japanese invaders. Medical aid must be available whereever men were meeting their enemy. This simple approach was something new in the Chinese struggle. Aid,

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both human and material, had to be devised from most primitive resources. Bethune triumphed over the greatest difficulties. He inspired men and women both by his teaching and example. His reserves of energy were amazing and it is doubtful if any surgeon has ever performed such feats of prolonged operating as were almost daily occurences in Bethune's primitive theatres.

The inspiration he gave to and received from the Chinese struggle makes one of the most stirring epics of medical history of all time. He did much to repay the debt that the Western world owes to our Eastern friends. In China they will not soon forget it. This beautifully simple account of the life of one who consumed himself for his friends and for a great cause will stimulate many in the West to work actively for world peace and for the full flowering of the human spirit everywhere.

HORACE JOULES

POLITICAL LITERATURE

The British Working Class Reader, 1790-1848, by R. K. Webb. (192 pp. Allen & Unwin. *18s.*)

THE struggle for the mind of the working class runs parallel with the struggle of capitalist and proletarian at the point of production. The battle of ideas is no modern phenomenon, and as the working class over the past 150 years have achieved increasing awareness of their position in society, and as anti-capitalist ideas have spread, so the efforts to hinder and confuse the realisation of working-class consciousness have been intensified. The first half of the 19th century is a crucial period in the history of this particular facet of the class struggle; for one thing, we get the fascinating story of the emergence of an anti-capitalist ideology within the working-class movement, and on the other hand, we have the first concerted attempts by bourgeois propagandists to write a political and social literature directed towards a working class audience. Neither side of the story has yet been adequately discussed, and the present book is only a small step in the right direction but it has at least the merit of posing, and attempting to answer, some of the general questions involved. The scope of this book by Mr. Webb, an American historian, is, however, much narrower than its title suggests. Indeed, the title is positively misleading, for the book discusses not what the working class reader read between 1790 and 1848, but what he was offered by middle and upper class apologists if he was prepared to read their literature. Mr. Webb takes the major crises and movements down to 1850, with the important exception of Chartism, which he omits altogether, and discusses some items of the literary response of the propertied classes to working class agitations and ideas. What proportion of the working class read this literature, and to what extent they were influenced is one of the crucial problems which Mr. Webb is only able to answer in very inadequate and general terms.

Within these narrow limits the book is useful, more perhaps for its bibliographical references than for any new insights into our working class history. The author, as far as one can judge, is not unsympathetic to the working-class movement, but his general knowledge of British history could be bettered at a number of points, and his account lacks a firm grasp of broad trends. On some matters he is badly misinformed, as when he suggests (it is one of his few references to Chartism), that, 'perhaps Chartism was more an attitude than a movement'.

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Rightly he devotes a good deal of attention to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, on which he has some new information, and he concludes with three chapters which survey middle class pamphleteering on Agricultural disturbances, the New Poor Law and Trade Unionism. Mr. Webb has an easy and pleasant style; but the book, because its approach is unselective, and because it is lacking in a sense of historical perspective, is one for the student rather than for the general reader. But as an introduction to its subject, limited though Mr. Webb has made it, the book will be of assistance to future workers in this period.

JOHN SAVILLE

AUSTRALIA

Australian Government and Politics, by J. D. B. Miller (246 pp. Duckworth. *15s.*)

THIS book is a factual analytical account of the historical background and development of the political, economic and social institutions in Australia. It makes no attempt to be critical. It covers the period from when the British took possession of Australia (and used it as a Convict Colony) up to 1854. The appendices contain valuable maps showing the location of Australia's primary and secondary industries, and natural resources. There are graphs showing the voting trends at elections since 1919, and charts dealing with the receipts and expenditure of Commonwealth and State Consolidated Revenue Funds. The appendices also contain interesting notes on the Communist Party, the Press and Radio, and the Trade Union movement.

Mr. Miller performs a useful task by putting into perspective the evolution of Australia's institutions and development. He makes interesting comparisons between the British and Australian electoral systems. At the present time it is particularly interesting to learn of these differences, since both of these countries claim to have free elections. The description of the development of the Trade Union movement and its influence on the Australian Labour Party is important. He emphasises the militancy of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions, which he attributes to a 'Yeasty native radicalism'. Mr. Miller describes the drift to the right of the Labour Government after it had come into power. After World War I Mr. W. M. Hughes the Labour Prime Minister, and other Labour politicians were expelled from the Party and later formed a Coalition with the Opposition, and Mr. Hughes became Prime Minister of an anti-Labour Government. Except for a short period in the 'thirties, Labour did not return to power until 1940. The Labour Government adhered pretty closely to the Party Platform until 1947 or 1948, when it again began to swing to the right. He describes how this was brought about to a great extent by pressure from the Catholic Action Group, which represents the Right Wing of the Roman Catholic Church. These departures from the principles of the Labour Party programme, were again opposed by the Trade Unions and the rank and file of the movement. In the elections in 1949, Labour was badly defeated at the polls. Mr. Miller has traced the gradual but continual development of the powers of the Federal Parliament *vis a vis* the State Parliaments since 1901 when the Commonwealth was formed.

Mr. Miller is nearly always objective in his treatment of the subject under discussion. When he is not

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objective, the text gives the impression of a later interpolation. It is a pity he refers to the Petrov affair before the facts in connection with this case had become known.

JESSIE M. G. STREET.

BRITAIN IN ROMAN TIMES

Roman Britain, by I. A. Richmond. (240 pp. Pelican Books. *2s. 6d.*)

NOT so long ago, history began in 1066. A first chapter in a book, or a first volume in a series, was labelled 'Pre-Conquest' History and began with a few sentences on the 'prehistoric' period and the Romans, before it got down to Anglo-Saxon institutions. Then came archaeology. A mass of detailed local works and a few on a wider scale interpreted the evidence of the spade, in the light of the authors' varying acquaintance with the main events of Roman History. The climax of these works was Collingwood's first volume in the *Oxford History of England,* in 1937. It is still the standard full scale work, though there is much new knowledge since 1937.

Professor Richmond is one of the three or four top-ranking archaeologists of today; he is also an acute historian. His short book, the first serious attempt at a history of the Roman period in Britain, makes full, equal and integrated use of our knowledge of the history of Roman Europe and of the archaeology of Roman Britain. It is good reading. Not every reader will endorse all his interpretations or share the philosophical pre-conceptions which guide his selection of evidence. But he has avoided the temptation to give undue weight to the military history of the north, where evidence is comparatively easy, and has given a full treatment to the more important civilian life. The main criticism is that there is little sense of development in the 400 years of the Roman period. Most of Professor Richmond's picture is valid for the second century A.D., and the reader must be sharp to notice how much of the evidence relates to the fourth century. But it is much the best book on the subject at any price and will probably remain so for a long while.

JOHN MORRIS

Shorter Notices

Greek Myths, by Robert Graves. (2 Vols. Penguin Books. pp. 370, 412, 1 folding map. *7s.*)

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Greek mythology. And in the long commentaries to each myth he follows out this praiseworthy course with impressive erudition. Yet the result is disappointing. He does not approach his sources critically enough, trying in each case to disentangle genuine tradition from the literary or philosophical constructions so widespread in the ancient world. And he has no clear conception of the origin and growth of class society. Everything is explained by the victorious struggle of Hellenic patriarchy against Aegean matriarchy. The Moon-goddess and her annually sacrificed consort turn up on every page. There is a substantial kernel of truth in all this. But we cannot fruitfully study the superstructure of society with only an occasional side-glance at its basis, the forces of production and the relations of production.

R.B.

M.R.A. Exposed, by S. S. Mariswamy. (120 pp. Imayam Press, Madras. *3s.*)

A REVEALING factual exposure of Moral Rearmament operations in relation to India by an Indian journalist who went to Caux.

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Roll on the Day

so there's the voice of the young guard. Today he wears the uniform of a railway guard—and he doesn't want to change back into battle dress. He asks only that overdue 'just and enduring peace', and 'roll on the day when the line is managed by a democratically elected committee of railwaymen'. In short, the peace and socialism he fought for, ten years ago. Now, the job of this magazine is to provide reliable high quality ammunition in that fight for peace and socialism. That is why we win wholehearted support from that English railwayman. And from the coal miner in Nova Scotia, who finds it 'the best magazine in the movement. We used to get it in the early 'twenties and 'thirties. At present we are only working part-time; we are getting the effect here of the cold war'.

From Strength

THIS August number is jam-packed with ammunition. On peace and practical ways of promoting peaceful co-existence, there are R.P.D.'s Notes, Ivor Montagu's article, the text of the remarkable proposal for ending fighting in Malaya (shamefully ignored by Government and press), and the moving Hiroshima pictures. On the right to strike, a stirring study by Arthur Horner, the miners' leader. On the drive for a real socialist policy which will be the heart of the coming Labour Party Conference, James Klugmann. And the wonderful newly discovered letters by Engels, alive with interest on the great East End strike movement and the first May Day. Hundreds of readers will exclaim on reading this L.M.: 'That exactly hits the nail on the head! Just what I needed!' If only all would straightaway see it goes into the hands of friends and neighbours. For strength of conviction and clarity is exactly what the British people need today to tip the scale and move on to make peace and socialism a reality. Then indeed they could 'negotiate from strength' with their masters—and give a wholly new meaning to that sinister phrase.

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